

Message Text

SECRET

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3337

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

S E C R E T PEKING 383

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJECT: CHANG YING, CHOUIST INFORMANT

REF: A. PEKING 351; B. HONG KONG 2276; C. HONG KONG 1994

1. ALTHOUGH CLARE HOLLINGWORTH HAS BEEN VERY COOPERATIVE WITH BOTH USLO AND CONGEN HONG KONG AND WE CONSIDER HER AN ENERGETIC AND TALENTED JOURNALIST, WE FEEL CONSTRAINED TO REGISTER OUR RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE ACCURACY OF SOME OF HER INFORMATION AND, ON OCCASION, HER METHODS OF OPERATION. IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT SHE USES THE NAME OF DAVID FLOYD, LONDON BASED COMMUNIST AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT FOR THE TELEGRAPH, AND SHE HAS A PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE OR SENSATIONAL STORY LIKELY TO INCUR THE WRATH OF THE CHINESE. SHE WAS REPRIMANDED AT LEAST ONCE BY THE INFORMATION DEPARTMENT FOR ONE OF HER STORIES LAST YEAR AND HAS BEEN CAUTIOUS SINCE.

2. USLO EXPERIENCE MAY ILLUSTRATE OUR CONCERN. ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO A DAVID FLOYD ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE TELEGRAPH REPORTING A SINO-SOVIET BORDER CLASH IN THE SENSITIVE AREA NEAR CHINA'S MISSILE TESTING SITE IN SHUANG CHENG TZU. USLO OFFICER PROVIDED HOLLINGWORTH A COPY OF FLOYD ARTICLE WITH THE COMMENT THAT AN INTERESTING STORY HAD BEEN MARRED BY HIS WILDLY OVERSTATING THE SIZE OF SOVIET FORCES IN MONGOLIA. HOLLINGWORTH REPLIED THAT SHE COULDN'T UNDERSTAND FLOYD'S MAKING A MISTAKE OF THAT NATURE SINCE, ACCORDING TO HOLLINGWORTH, HE IS WELL CONNECTED WITH OFFICIAL BRITISH SOURCES

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WHO PROVIDE HIM WITH THIS TYPE OF INFORMATION. SHE FURTHER CLAIMED

THAT SHE HAD CHECKED AT THE BRITISH EMBASSY AND THEY HAD CONFIRMED REPORTED BORDER CLASH.

3. SINCE SHE HAD ASKED THAT USLO OFFICER NOT REVEAL HER STATEMENTS TO BRITISH, WE MADE ROUTINE INQUIRY AT BRITISH EMBASSY ON FLOYD ARTICLE WITHOUT REFERENCE TO HOLLINGWORTH INFORMATION. BRITISH EMBOFF BOYD SAID THEY HAD NO INFORMATION TO CONFIRM ALLEGED CLASH, BUT THAT HE WAS QUITE CONFIDENT THAT STORY WAS HOLLINGWORTH'S AND THAT SHE HAD GOTTEN IT FROM FRENCH OR JAPANESE MILATT SOURCES. BRITISH HAVE INDICATED TO US THAT HOLLINGWORTH IS NOT ABOVE FIBBING TO THEM AS WELL ABOUT HER SOURCES OF HER INFORMATION.

4. ALL OF THE ABOVE IS SIMPLY TO ILLUSTRATE THAT CLARE HOLLINGWORTH SOMETIMES OPERATES IN RATHER STRANGE WAYS, AND HER REPORTING SHOULD PROBABLY BE TREATED WITH CAUTION. SEVERAL OF HER STORIES THIS PAST YEAR SUCH AS MAO'S "MASSIVE STROKE" HAVE BEEN REAL CLINKERS, AND WE FRANKLY FIND HER ALLEGED RELATIONSHIP WITH CHANG YING (REF C) IMPLAUSIBLE. THAT WAS OUR REASON FOR WANTING TO CHECK WITH AMBASSADOR YOUDE.

5. THE FOREGOING NOTWITHSTANDING, CLARE HOLLINGWORTH CONTINUES TO BE A WORTHWHILE CONTACT, AND A USLO OFFICER WILL BE SEEING HER THIS WEEKEND FOR A DINNER SHE HAS ARRANGED WITH JULIEN SCHUMANN. BUSH

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